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ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

DECEMBER, 1854.

THE WAY TO PEACE:

OR A SKETCH OF THE MEANS AND METHODS FOR ABOLISHING WAR.

PEACE is a word used in a variety of senses ; but, when employed to designate the Cause of Peace, it means the special, associated efforts made to do away the custom of nations settling their disputes by a resort to arms. Here is our sole aim, the Abolition of International War. We seek to get nations out of this practice into the habit of adjusting all their difficulties by peaceful, Christian methods that shall supersede entirely the alleged necessity of the sword, and eventually render war between nations just as unnecessary as duels now are between individuals.

This, we grant, is a very difficult task ; so difficult, indeed, as to require, for its full accomplishment, long ages of combined and strenuous exertions. War is not a mushroom that springs up in the night, and may be brushed away in the morning. It is not only an offshoot of depravity in its worst forms, but the steady and hardy growth of such depravity for more than five thousand years ; a custom during all this time rooted in the habits of society, imbedded in the structure of government, and woven into the web and woof of the world's immemorial character. It is fastened upon our race by influences stronger than screws of iron, or hooks of steel. Almost everything around us is subidized for its support. Power and prestige, wealth and fashion, education and example, the school and the fireside, the press and the pulpit, the pen, the pencil and the

chisel, poetry and eloquence, history and philosophy, the widest and mightiest influences of society, all are at work everywhere to confirm and prolong its baleful sway.

Still this custom may and must be done away; nor is there in all these influences aught to forbid the hope of such a consummation. Customs very like this, such as knight-errantry, trial by ordeal or judicial combat, and the private wars of feudal times, have actually been abolished. War itself has already been stripped of more than half its primitive horrors, and undergone changes greater than would now suffice for its utter extinction. Its doom is prospectively sealed; and all over the earth we see at work causes that must in time exterminate it from the world. The gospel, fully developed, and rightly applied, has ample power for this purpose; and the promises of God so expressly assure us of a day when all nations shall cease from war, that we must either discard the whole Bible, or believe the absolute certainty in due time of universal and permanent peace.

But how will it come? We can expect no miracle, no supernatural interposition of providence, no reversal or suspension of the laws which require an adequate cause for every effect, and, least of all, no such change in the nature of mankind as shall extinguish their war-passions, and make them a race of angels instead of men. Every promise of God implies the necessity of appropriate means for its fulfillment; and his promise of peace, like all his other promises, can be fulfilled only by a proper use of the means He has appointed for the purpose. These means are all included in a right application of the gospel to the case; and such means Christians are bound to unite and persist in using until a stop is actually put to all wars in Christendom, and an end to her whole war-system.

But by what process can we reach this result? The gospel must of course do the work; but how can it? It is God's remedy for war; but, like every other remedy, it can cure no evil to which it is not applied; and how can we insure its effective application to this great sin and scourge of our race? Not by preaching merely its general truths to individuals; for it has been thus preached all over Europe for fifteen centuries without putting an end to war in any country. Indeed, no government in Christendom has yet dreamed of abolishing the custom, while her standing armies, in little more than 100 years, have increased some six or eight hundred per cent., from half a million to three and sometimes more than four millions even in peace. Why all this under the full blaze of the gospel?

Simply because its pacific principles have never yet been rightly applied to the case. That application must go to the seat of the disease; the gospel must put its hand on the real main-spring of the mischief. War is the work, not of individuals as such, but of governments or rulers alone; and, until the gospel, in its pacific principles and claims, shall be faithfully applied to these, the custom will never cease from any land. But how can it be made to bear effectually on rulers? Under a government like ours, if not under every other, we can reach them mainly, if not solely, through the people, whose will, even under a despotism as well as a democracy, must rule in the long run. The power here is all in their hands; and rulers, as their servants, must heed their wishes, or give place very soon to those who will.

The way, then, is clear as noon. We must christianize public sentiment on this subject, and get from the mass of the people such a demand for the settlement of all national disputes without the sword, as no rulers in Christendom will dare or long desire to refuse. That demand would in time, if not very soon, work out the consummation we seek. It would lead to the gradual disuse of war by the adoption of far better means for the adjustment of difficulties between nations. They might, if they would, agree among themselves before fighting incomparably better than after; but if not, they might either accept the offer of mediators, or refer the points in issue to umpires mutually chosen. Let them beforehand stipulate for such a mode of final adjustment. Let them expressly agree to have all their future controversies adjusted in the last resort by some form of arbitration, to abide by the decision of their referees, and ask, if dissatisfied, only a new hearing, or a different reference, thus making sure of a settlement in every case without a resort to arms. Such a measure, once adopted in good faith by any two nations, would be pretty sure, under God, to prevent all war between them; and their example would probably be followed in time by the other governments of Christendom, and thus unite them all in a League of Perpetual Peace. Let England and the United States, for example, try the experiment for fifty or a hundred years, long enough for a fair trial; and before the expiration of either period, both the parties, like the different States of our own Republic, will doubtless have ceased from all thought of ever appealing to the sword for the settlement of any controversy with each other.

How, then, can we secure a consummation so desirable? By the

power of a christianized public opinion strongly in its favor. Let such an opinion diffuse its omnipresent influence through every community; let it speak to rulers by votes and petitions; let its voice be heard through the press, from the pulpit and the rostrum, in the school and at the fireside, on the farm and in the shop, in store and street, in the counting-room and the market-place, in the whole intercourse of men, throughout all the ramifications of society. Such a public opinion Christians ought to form, as they might, in every Christian land. Children of the God of Peace, followers of the Prince of Peace, it is their appropriate business, their high and glorious privilege; and, having in the principles of the gospel, in the promises and the providence of God, ample means of success, they might, if they would only gird themselves in earnest for the work, leaven ere long all Christendom with such sentiments on this subject as would render war between any of its nations morally impossible, and lead, in time, to the adoption of such substitutes for it as must obviate at once every plea of necessity for its blind and brutal arbitraments.

On this point, the path of duty for Christians is perfectly plain. Their very profession binds them to the Cause of Peace; nor can they resist or neglect its claims without treachery to their Master in heaven, the Prince of Peace. Let them be careful to learn and do their whole duty in regard to it. Let them examine the subject well in the light of his gospel, and deeply imbue their own souls with his spirit in this respect. Let them inculcate the principles of peace on every one under their instruction or care, and breath its spirit into all around them. In the family, the school and the church, from the pulpit and the press, let them enforce the pacific principles of the gospel just as they would its requisitions of repentance and faith. Let them embalm this cause in their purest, strongest affections, and pray for it with the same frequency and fervor that they would for the world's evangelization. Let them give to it with the same liberality, labor for it with equal zeal, and wait with similar anxiety to witness its triumphs over the earth. Let them watch for opportunities to promote its interests. Let them touch every chord that can be made to vibrate in its favor. Let them set and keep at work in its behalf the great engines of popular influence through the community. Let every pulpit and church, every Sabbath and common school, every seminary of learning from the highest to the lowest, every fireside in Christendom, be pressed into its service to train up everywhere a generation of such peace-makers as shall

spontaneously plead for peace as the great earthly boon promised in the gospel, and protest against war as the master-evil of our world. Could the mass of Christians do all this without insuring ere long perpetual peace in every Christian land, and eventually over the whole earth?

This cause demands a very large increase of effort. There ought to be spent in its behalf tenfold more labor and money. It has never had even a tithe of the means requisite for full success; and the marvel is that, with resources so slender, it has accomplished half as much as it has. The Peace Society ought to have the means of employing far more agents, of multiplying its publications by scores of thousands, and scattering them broad-cast over the whole country. It should be able to bring and keep the subject before all our ecclesiastical bodies, and higher seminaries of learning, before every State Legislature, before Congress and the nation, before every city and town, every village, hamlet and habitation in the land.

REQUESTS TO THE CAUSE OF PEACE.

WE are all stewards of God. We neither have, nor can have, any good thing that did not come from his hand. Whatever we possess of wealth, or any other means of usefulness, is a sacred trust from the Great Giver, for our use of which he will call us hereafter to a strict account. Property, though not the sole nor chief trust, is yet a very important one. It is a common means of usefulness, and may be made, if rightly used, an instrument of vast good to mankind. It may feed the hungry, and clothe the naked; it may heal the sick, educate the ignorant, and reclaim the vicious; it may provide asylums for the insane, the blind, and other victims of misfortune, and relieve a thousand forms of ill to which the children of calamity and sorrow are exposed. It has even a higher mission still; it may send the gospel to the unevangelized, the light of heaven to the benighted, the blessings of salvation to perishing millions. How sacred must be a trust that can be made to accomplish results so dear to humanity, so important to the welfare of mankind in time and through eternity! How solicitous should we be to use an instrument of so much good in the wisest and most effective manner!